

TRAFFIC ZONE

VOLUME 27

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“Quality of Life” in Greensboro – GDOT’s Role

During property rezoning cases, economic development announcements, etc., you’ll often hear citizens and elected officials use the term “Quality of Life”. Many times they use the term in reference to items they oppose or things they fear will impact their “Quality of Life”. Or on the other hand, they use the term for items they support or things they feel will enhance their “Quality of Life”. So what’s so special about this “Quality of Life” thing anyway and what role do we (GDOT) play in maintaining it in Greensboro?

Simply stated, the term “Quality of Life” differs for each individual (since it’s really a statement of your personal perspectives, beliefs, and values) but, typically refers to the type of nation, community, society, and economy that each of us desires or wants to create. A few recent examples of transportation related items associated with the term “Quality of Life” include the need to improve air quality, need to reduce traffic congestion, need to provide more transportation choices and enhance public transportation, need to use downtown parking to help support continued growth and new economic development, need to maintain our roads and bridges to a high standard, etc.

GDOT (and the City of Greensboro organization) plays a critical role in maintaining, enhancing, and in certain cases, creating “Quality of Life” in Greensboro. If you stop to think about it a minute, it really should be no surprise that the jobs we do every day and the services we provide have a pronounced impact on our community, and really are at the core of what many in Greensboro highly value and factor into their “Quality of Life” quotient and expectations. To see our real impact on “Quality of Life”, think about and visualize how our community would be impacted if we had no coordinated signal system or professional staff to run it, if we had no transit system to get people to and from work,

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GDOT

Mission Statement

*We are committed to improving
safety and mobility and
providing quality services
to our community by:*

- *Being Customer-focused and Team Oriented*
- *Being Cost-effective and Innovative*
- *Developing, Empowering, and Recognizing our Employees*



Visitors to the GDOT offices at the MMOB are always greeted with a warm smile from Administrative Assistant **Michelle Shue**. Her persistent, positive attitude towards customer service ensures first impressions upon visitors are lasting ones.





A D M I N I S T R A T I O N

Planned Leave Without Pay (PLWOP)

The City offers a PLWOP program that allows employees to purchase additional paid leave hours through payroll deduction. The cost of the leave is conveniently deducted from your check over the course of the following year. If you are interested or need assistance with applying, please contact either **Marcel Edwards** or **Karen Marineau** to obtain the proper form, or you may print the form from the Human Resources home page on the Intranet. This is the only form that will be accepted. You must complete the top portion with your personal information, place your initials beside each "employee acknowledgement," sign your name and have your supervisor approve prior to approval from the GDOT director. Your request must be received by Kay Scott in Human Resources no later than 5:00 PM on Friday, December 30, 2005. Requests received after this date will not be accepted.

The first payment will be deducted during the January 15, 2006 payroll. If you submit a request and a deduction is not on your January 15, 2006 check stub, please call Kay Scott immediately at 2467. They will determine why the entry was not made. Corrections will be made only through the payroll cut-off for the January 31, 2006 payroll. Any requests for changes after that date will not be honored.

The maximum hours that can be purchased are determined by your leave earning rate, and this schedule is printed on the request form. The cost of the PLWOP is deducted from your pay check in 24 equal payments on a pre-tax basis. To calculate the per pay period cost, divide the annual salary (as of 12/31/05) by 2080 hours to get your hourly rate of pay. Then, multiply the hourly rate of pay by the number of hours being purchased to get your total cost. Finally, divide the total cost by 24 pay periods to get your per pay period deduction.



She's a winner! Congratulations to **Karen Marineau**! She was recently named the 2005 *Administration Section Employee of the Year* based on her enthusiasm, hard work and job expertise. Please stop by her office to see her wonderful trophy and congratulate Karen on a job well done!

Administration's Financial Team

Our financial Team, **Linda Paschal** and **Tonya Williams** are both well-organized and proficient individuals who handle a variety of tasks, such as maintaining professional services contracts, ordering office supplies, parking and miscellaneous billing. They also handle vendor payments, purchase orders / requisitions, check orders, procurement cards, etc. In addition, they handle travel arrangements, training expenses, conference and seminar registrations, budget adjustments, tracking MPO grant expenses, capital inventory, and other funds. A system of "checks and balances" is required for all of these transactions prior to forwarding to Finance.

They have a good understanding of basic accounting principles and are detail oriented, which is essential for the "big umbrella" that they hold. They must be proficient in the use of the Lawson System and the Procurement Card System to ensure the integrity of the information that is being input. They work closely with the Finance Department to ensure that all City policies and guidelines are met.

The financial Team will be happy to assist you when submitting paperwork. Please make sure to include proper documentation and relevant information so that the request is not delayed in the Accounting section of the Finance department.



Tonya Williams and Linda Paschal

Administration continued on page 15



YEAR-ROUND WRAPPING WITH GTA

VIBRANT! COLORFUL! VIVID!

No, we are not describing the crop of poinsettias that have flooded the area in time for the Christmas holidays. We're talking about buses. City buses. Select vehicles of the Greensboro Transit Authority have undergone a vehicular "Extreme Makeover", shedding their everyday blue, white and green livery in lieu of eye catching graphics representing soft drinks, college programs and even other vehicles! Welcome to the world of bus wrapping.



Bus wrapping is utilized by transit systems around the world as a way of generating revenue, increasing the useful life of vehicle exteriors and adding a bold infuse of color to the urban landscape. It is a labor-intensive process, paying great dividends to transportation providers and the community in which the mobile artwork makes its rounds. I had the pleasure to observe David Kräcker and Doug Crawford of Hight Kräcker apply a wrap to bus #799 to promote Coca-Cola's newest soft drink Vault.

The process begins with the printing of the design image. A special vinyl laminate by 3M is used to cover the bus from front to back. This material is UV resistant to eliminate fading of the image with exposure to sunlight. It also repels dirt and moisture. Although buses around the world come in all shapes and sizes, the printing firms usually maintain a large database of bus types, and will recognize the dimensions needed for any particular type of bus. In this case, the artwork was printed to fit a Gillig Phantom passenger bus operated by GTA.

The installers vary in their application techniques depending on the type of material used, but in many cases with GTA vehicles, a two-man crew will start at the roofline and work their way down with the first of two overlapping layers. They pull the backings off of the self-adhesive vinyl, similar to wallpaper and lay it against the bus for positioning. Some vinyls are more forgiving than others and will allow adjustments in the placement, but the printer generally provides a certain amount of excess for "wastage." The next layer is then applied, working its way to the bottom of the vehicle. As they work their way down, they take the time to squeeze out air bubbles that appear.



After several hours of work in the cool of the GTA bus maintenance garage, the body of the vehicle is covered. During application, outside temperature and environment is crucial. If the temperature is too low, the vinyl can become brittle and crack as it is applied. Direct sunlight is also an enemy to wrapping, bad for the material as well as the installers themselves.



For safety as well as comfort of the passengers, the passenger window areas must maintain an adequate level of visibility. In the spaces where the vinyl will cover the glass, they have been provided with thousands of tiny holes about ½ millimeter in diameter each. Inside each hole is a clear plastic coating to keep dirt and moisture out. From a distance outside the vehicle, you see only the graphic images, but inside visibility is virtually unobstructed. For the operator, the windshields, operator's window and entrance door window panels are kept clear.

Once the sheets are all applied to the bus, the tedious job of trimming starts. Armed with sharp hobby knives, the installers begin to cut around the numerous protrusions of the vehicle that must remain uncovered for safety and operational

WRAPPING continued on page 15



P A R K I N G

Parking - Where Quality Counts!

The Parking Operations Section is continually striving to meet customer expectations by emphasizing the quality of appearance and services of the parking decks and the on-street and off-street parking locations. We are developing a continuous commitment to customer satisfaction through ongoing communications, marketing, education, evaluation, and continual improvement.

Each of the parking decks and maintenance operations are working on various quality items within their respective areas of operations:

- Davie St. Deck – ADA compliance items, painting curbing areas for safety, and ongoing cleaning of facility for customer-friendliness
- Greene St. Deck – Cleaning stairwell and elevator lobby areas, assessment by paint contractors for color coding lobby levels, relocation of interior traffic signs to create greater visibility for motorists, and evaluation and repair of roof system over elevator equipment room due to leaking problems
- Church St. Deck - Cleaning elevator landings, light fixtures, signs throughout the deck, fire extinguisher cabinets, and assessment of painting needs for handrails and exterior doors throughout facility
- Bellemeade St. Deck - Cleaning throughout the deck, painting curb areas for safety, replacing signs that are faded, contractor review of glass block replacement for the Elm St. stairwells
- Meter Shop - Installation of decorative parking meters in the East Market Street Streetscape project, installation of new meters in the Summit Ave. lot, and continual maintenance review of parking facilities and meter operations

Our marketing campaign, “Beat the Heat”, was a great success during the Dog Days of Summer. We hit the street distributing a thousand flyers encouraging on-street and off-street surface lot parkers to try our city-owned covered parking decks to park their vehicles out of the heat of the blistering sun. Our message was also picked up by local



television news that ran a story on the campaign. Parkers who responded to the promotion were given a free week in the decks to try it out. This campaign ran the whole month of August and we had over 100 participants. As a follow-up, we have mailed out thank you letters and provided information to the participants should they wish to park on a regular basis in the decks.

Finally, we would also like to welcome our newest team member, **Scott Jones**! He comes to us from the Guilford County School System and is our newest maintenance mechanic. Welcome aboard, Scott!



E N G I N E E R I N G

The Engineering Division has been busy conducting several transportation studies. The following engineering studies have recently been completed or are currently underway: Church Street feasibility study, Battleground Avenue and Cone Boulevard intersection improvements, Battleground Avenue and Westridge Road intersection improvements, Battleground Avenue and New Garden Road intersection improvements, Mackay Road feasibility study, Cornwallis Drive traffic study, and the Martin Luther King Jr. Drive traffic study.

In addition to these studies, the Engineering Division recently kicked-off a planning study to revisit Greensboro's street design standards. The rewrite of the street design standards will involve a multitude of input from various City departments, utility companies, developers, citizens and steering committees. The comprehensive study will evaluate street standards from various cities across North Carolina and the United States, and will look at various street design elements such as: street width, horizontal/vertical alignment, street connectivity, traffic calming, curb and gutter type, sidewalks, planting areas and bicycle accommodations.

The street design standards study kicked off with a Technical Advisory Team meeting and a Citizens Advisory Team meeting on November 17. The Citizens Advisory Team is comprised of the same members that are overseeing the rewrite of the Land Development Ordinance. The street design standards study will take 12 to 18 months to complete.

The Engineering Division has also been working with the North Carolina Department of Transportation to select a consulting firm to design plans and construction documents for the replacement of the City's Traffic Signal System. The City and State have selected the firm of Kimley Horn and Associates and is currently refining the design scope of the project.

As we are in the middle of several engineering studies, we are starting to see the fruits of our labor of past studies paying off. Two major Connections 2000 Bond projects were recently completed, (South Elm-Eugene Street, East Market Street Phase I) and several other projects are underway or are scheduled to start soon. Projects that are underway or are scheduled to start by spring 2006 are: East Market Street Phases II and III, Friendly Avenue, Wendover Avenue Intersections, Greene Street, Lake Jeanette & Bass Chapel Roundabout, Franklin Boulevard, and New Garden Road Phase II.

Church Street Widening Project

The Engineering Division has initiated a project planning study to evaluate North Church Street between West Wendover Avenue and West Cone Blvd. for potential improvements. The project was one that was identified for funding as part of the Connections 2025 Transportation Bond Referendum which passed in November 2000.

We have conducted two public meetings and two stakeholder meetings to date to solicit input for the project. At the first public workshop, we presented the results of our preliminary analysis of the corridor and received valuable ideas, suggestions, and comments from citizens who use this corridor on a daily basis.



At the second public workshop on November 3rd, we presented our proposed alternative and received public comments. The proposed alternative was recommended to include:

- Widening North Church Street to a 5-lane cross-section (54' curb width)
- Sidewalks along both sides
- Bus pull-outs at key locations
- Realign Tankersley Drive to intersect with North Church Street at a 90 degree angle
- Construct monolithic islands at various locations to help reduce crashes

We will now reevaluate the proposed design and come back to a third public meeting where we will present the final design concept. Construction is tentatively scheduled to begin on the project in spring 2009.



E N G I N E E R I N G

Simple Changes Make Improvements to Safety and Capacity:

The Engineering Division recently implemented two improvement projects by simply resurfacing and remarking two highly traveled areas of Greensboro to create additional traffic lanes.

Lawndale Drive was resurfaced between Cone Boulevard and Pisgah Church Road this summer and remarked as a 5-lane roadway with a continuous center turn lane. Lawndale was previously marked as a 4-lane section without turn lanes and was experiencing a high rate of accidents associated with the lack of left turn provisions and congestion associated with motorists stopping in the through lanes to make left turns. Lawndale Drive is 48 feet wide and was remarked for 5 narrow lanes to create a continuous left turn lane along this highly traveled roadway.



The Guilford College Road and Hornaday Road intersection was resurfaced and remarked to provide southbound dual left turn lanes, greatly improving traffic flow through this intersection. During the normal PM peak hour, there are 503 southbound left turns destined for the shopping centers along Wendover Avenue. The much-needed dual left turns were created by simply removing a small concrete traffic island, resurfacing the intersection and remarking for dual left turn lanes. The improvements to Guilford College Road and Hornaday Road were implemented just in time for the Christmas shopping season. The improvements have greatly enhanced traffic safety and reduced congestion along two highly traveled areas.

Both of these improvements at Lawndale and at Guilford College were made at a fraction of the cost of a typical roadway widening project, and have made a major improvement to the motoring public.

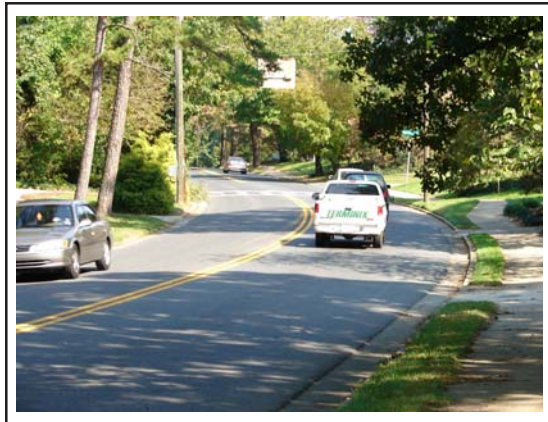
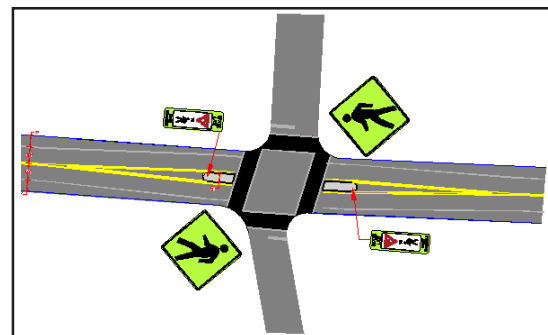
Cornwallis Drive Traffic Study:

GDOT recently concluded its study of Cornwallis Dr. between Lawndale Dr. and Elm St. The study was ordered after receiving many traffic concerns from the residents along Cornwallis Dr. This section of Cornwallis is a highly traveled thoroughfare that carries approximately 11,000 vehicles per day with 85% of traffic traveling at or below 39 mph.

The first public meeting was held on August 11th, 2005 at Irvin Park Elementary School with the goal of gathering all of the residents concerns and suggestions. Three main concerns were voiced: traffic speeds, traffic volume, and heavy truck traffic. GDOT next conducted traffic counts and an in-depth study of the roadway. Recommendations were then developed and presented to the citizens of Cornwallis Dr. at the second public meeting on October 25th, 2005.

The solution that GDOT proposed at the second public meeting was the installation of islands and pedestrian crossings at four intersections along Cornwallis Dr. These islands will narrow the width of drivable pavement at the intersections with the intention of slowing overall speeds. The crossings at the intersections will feature stamped pavement and strong yellow-green pedestrian signs. The addition of the crosswalks will work well with the sidewalks that are planned for Cornwallis Dr. The decision was also made to reduce the speed limit from 35 mph to 30 mph.

The speed limit on Cornwallis Dr. will be reduced in early December and the island and crosswalk installation should begin in the spring of 2006.





O P E R A T I O N S

Ops Warehouse

- The GDOT Warehouse has completed renovations to our newly added office and warehouse space. We are now able to store many items that were previously kept outdoors or in sheltered areas.
- The GDOT Warehouse staff (**Steve Huddy**, **SueRee Durham**, and **Kimberly Dillard**) received the first “GDOT Operations Quality Project Award” for the month of November 2005 in recognition of our renovation project.
- Kimberly Dillard is now serving as “Employee Benefits Funds Committee” chair person for the second time in her career. Please see Kimberly for any EBFC questions or concerns.

Signs and Markings

SIGN SHOP ACTIVITIES

Along with the 3M Traffic Materials Division we will be co-hosting a Sign Shop Symposium January 26th, 2006 in the Signs and Markings Section. Cities and towns across the state will be attending the day long seminar.

The Sign Shop has recently become a Participating Member of the American Society of Testing and Materials (ASTM) and a Member of the Road and Paving Materials Committee. This membership entitles us to comment on new products and standards for current and future products to be used on our public streets and highways.

The Signs and Markings Section has installed a test deck on Rehobeth Church Rd for assessment of 3M Wet Reflective Pavement Markings. The purpose: review product durability and performance in order to enhance driver visibility/safety during adverse driving conditions. This is worst during night time driving on wet roads. Along with this technology, the use of Prismatic Reflective Sheetings for roadway signage continues to be observed. These materials require less light, while increasing angularity for greater visibility. These premium sheetings accent our streets and increase driver awareness. You may see some of these at work on Alamance Church Rd and Wendover Ave.

Special Events such as the A&T Homecoming and downtown festivals have kept us busy. We are already beginning to prepare for the upcoming ACC & NCAA tournaments.

The street print on MLK has been recoated along with other lane markings. This was done in house and really improved the look and functionality of the roadway.

TEAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Sign Shop has received kudos in November for design and installation of ADA interior signage at MMOB. This project is expected to be completed in February.

The Signs & Markings field staff received kudos for our efforts in expediting pedestrian safety improvements on Old Battleground Rd. through the Military Park.

All staff members within the Signs & Markings Section are participating in the implementation and routine use of DataStream. Computerized, mobile Toughbooks have now been assigned to all Crew Leaders. The addition of this technology has greatly enhanced efficiency managing work orders and inventories.

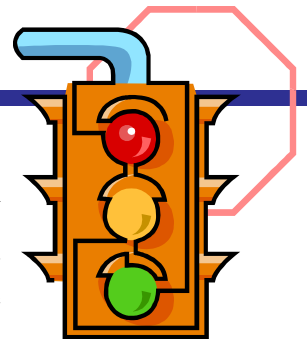
Traffic Signal Section

In the Traffic Signal Section, we are working on a number of road projects and intersection improvements, including West Wendover, Hilltop Road, East Market, and South Elm-Eugene Street. We also have new mast arm poles coming soon at the intersection of Holden & Market, with a new video detection system as well. Video detection uses a network of cameras to detect traffic at the intersection and replaces the in-pavement detection, which are difficult to maintain.

We have just completed the installation of over-height vehicle detectors and a flashing warning sign for the Davie Street railroad bridge (hope the truck drivers will see that!)

Also, look for a new signal soon at Eugene & Sycamore for the problematic pedestrian crossing at the courthouse.

Thanks to all the fine employees of the traffic signal section for the outstanding work they have done this year.





O P E R A T I O N S

Street Cleaning

The holidays and the end of another year are now upon us! We began 2005 with goals of completing six rounds of sweeping and six rounds of litter collection. We came very close with sweeping, and surpassed litter collection goals. Due to fuel cost concerns and the associated reduction in the number of sweepers out sweeping, we made five complete rounds and about 85% of the sixth. Litter collection still surpassed their goal. They completed nine thoroughfare rounds throughout the year.

With Mother Nature trying her best to hold on to warm weather, we were forced to twice reschedule the start of the Loose Leaf Collection program. With leaves finally starting to hit the ground, we were able to commence making our rounds on November 14th. A good amount of progress has been made so far despite the fact that the amount of crews were reduced from 16 to 12 and one round of collections was eliminated. We did extend the number of days per collection period to help us make our goal dates. As of this writing, we have collected 1,075 tons of leaves and serviced 7,640 houses.

The Street Cleaning Section wishes all of you a safe and happy holiday!



Stormwater Maintenance

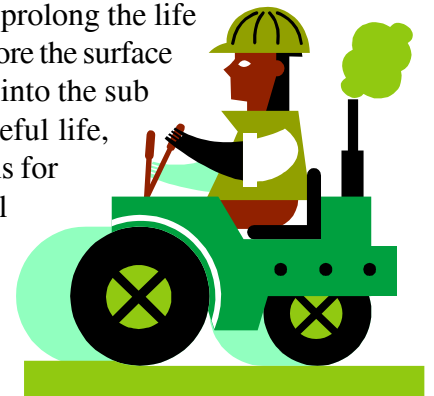
First we would like to wish **Louis Gaddy** well in his recent retirement. Louis severed GDOT and the citizens of Greensboro well during his 16+ years of service. We also would like to welcome **Mike Miller, Mark Stamper, Brandon Pike, Scott Cranford** and **Chris Galloway** to the Stormwater Maintenance Team. We look forward to working with them.

Our folks have been busy with the normal maintenance projects but we have worked on several joint GDOT projects with other sections, such as installing a trench grate on North Beech Dr. to alleviate water problems on private property. We also partnered with other GDOT sections to install a radius improvement at N. Elm & Pisgah Ch. Rd. We helped with clearing and grading for a turnaround project being installed by asphalt section on Thurston Rd. We also have helped out with replacing concrete on the sidewalk back log.

As we prepare for the winter, we have just completed 4 days of snow program training. We totally revamped our training program and we feel that it was well received by all in attendance. Another joint GDOT project gone well. Thanks all that participated.

Street Maintenance Asphalt

In the street maintenance section, we are gearing up for the winter months by reducing our paving operations to two paving crews. This will allow the remaining three paving crews to start crack pouring on our streets, or filling cracks or gaps with asphalt. This will be a big help to us in a couple of areas. First we will be saving fuel and the costs of asphalt that are generally generated during the non-paving season. We will also realize long-term savings. Crack pouring streets that have recently been paved (5 years or less) and have experienced premature cracking will help prolong the life of these streets. If we can seal the cracks before the surface water has had a chance to penetrate down into the sub base and weaken it, we can extend the useful life, reducing the costs of additional pavings. As for the remaining paving crews..they will continue to perform full depth patching at various locations throughout the city and keep our roads in the best traveling condition possible.





P L A N N I N G

Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Underway

The Greensboro Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization is currently working to develop the Greensboro Metropolitan Area Bicycle, Pedestrian and Greenways Plan. Known as the BiPed Plan, the effort seeks to identify practical improvements for safe and convenient bicycling and walking throughout the area. BiPed will provide the Metropolitan Planning Organization, area local governments and the North Carolina Department of Transportation a plan of recommended future improvements, policies, and other actions needed to create a more walkable and bicycle-friendly community.

The Plan is a response to interest by the community, and follows up on recommendations of the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan. It reflects the fact that the community and leaders in Greensboro and the surrounding areas are placing a greater emphasis than ever before on walking and bicycling for transportation, fitness, recreation, and connections in the community.

A series of public meetings were held in October 2005. The planning team is currently working to review public input and develop the technical work needed to assess conditions, needs, and opportunities for future improvements in the area. Additional public meetings will be held in spring 2006. The BiPed Plan will be released as a draft document at that time for public review. The final report is expected to be completed by summer 2006. To learn more about the BiPed plan or to provide comments, please visit www.greensboro-nc.gov/gdot/biped, or call (336) 373-2065 for more information.



Computer generated drawing

Battleground Rail Trail

Work continues on the Battleground Rail Trail project. Planned as a high-quality transportation facility for pedestrians and bicyclists, the route for Phase I follows a dedicated corridor south of Pisgah Church Road to Markland Drive, roughly along the abandoned rail right of way parallel to Battleground Avenue. The design includes an underpass at Cone Boulevard. The design for Phase I is complete, and right-of-way acquisition is now underway. Construction is expected in 2007. Significant federal grant funds have been leveraged for this Transportation Bond project thanks to the work of the NCDOT and the Metropolitan Planning Organization. Phase I is a significant extension of the regional trail system, as it connects to the Lake Brandt Greenway and the Bicentennial Trail to the north and west. Later phases are envisioned to extend the trail to Downtown Greensboro. Preliminary planning work is underway for trail design options, potential roadway reconfigurations, and the rail corridor abandonment and acquisition process south of Fernwood Drive to facilitate the development of the planned Phase II of the trail.



Actual design may vary



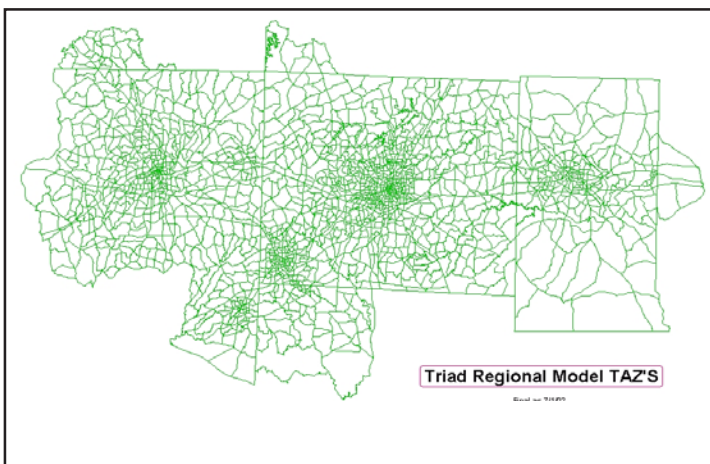
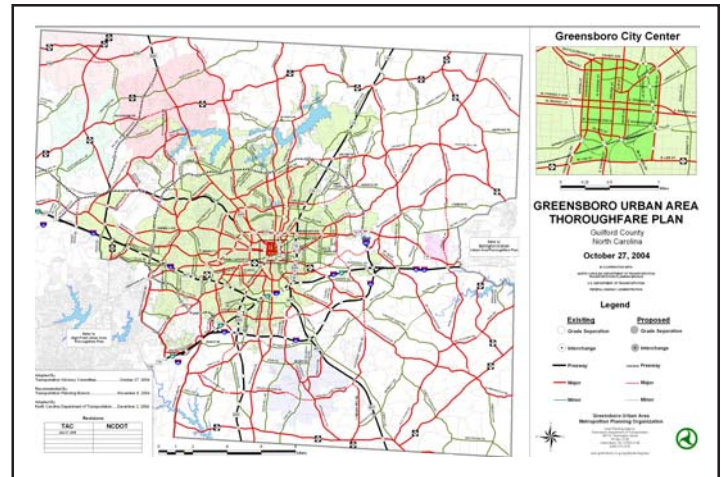
P L A N N I N G

Sidewalk Projects

The City of Greensboro's sidewalk construction efforts continue. The current construction contract, administered by the Engineering and Inspections Department, includes sections of Huffine Mill Road, Spring Garden Street, Holden Road, Yanceyville Street, and the recently completed and already well-utilized Starmount Walkway. Planning and project development work for new sidewalks continue, with an emphasis on high need locations along major roadways to connect residents to shopping, public transportation, schools, and a range of other destinations and amenities.

Long Range Roadway Planning Report

The travel demand model is key to the assessment of current and potential future travel demand and conditions on major roadways, at the regional level and on specific corridors in the Greensboro area. A new and improved Triad Travel Demand Model will be complete and ready for use by January 2006. The model is the result of a collaborative four-year effort between Greensboro, Winston-Salem, High Point, Burlington, NCDOT, and the Piedmont Authority for Regional Transportation (PART), and will use the latest information about area travel conditions and future growth assumptions.



As MPO staff, the Planning Division continues to work with regional partners including High Point, Winston Salem, and NCDOT on roadway planning. One recent initiative has been continuing roadway planning in the airport area. Future efforts will be closely coordinated with PART and its "Heart of the Triad Study", a combined look at airport area growth, land use planning, and transportation needs. Work continues on other areas as well, including eastern Greensboro and Guilford County, and on the Battleground corridor. These efforts involve the GDOT Engineering Division, City Planning, NCDOT, and other affected agencies, such as the Town of Summerfield on a study of a potential connection of NC 150.



Caution: Low Bridge

The railroad overpass at Davie Street near Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive carries an enormous amount of railroad traffic in the downtown area. Six Amtrak trains per day as well as countless Norfolk Southern freight trains cross the structure owned and maintained by the freight carrier. Traffic under the bridge is just as busy, with MLK serving as a direct route to downtown from Hwy 421 and points south of Greensboro. Recently, there have been a growing number of incidences where over-height tractor-trailer trucks have collided with the underside of the bridge. It almost became a normal sight for morning commuters to see trailers with their roofs peeled back like sardine cans. When four such collisions occurred recently within a two-week period, the Engineering Division sprang into action. A review of the bridge's accident history revealed a steady increase since 2001, when only two such collisions occurred. There were three in 2002, five in 2003, and six in 2004. Most notably...a total of nine collisions occurred in 2005.

While field conditions seemed to indicate a sufficient number of devices warning of the low clearance condition, it was determined that an actuated over height warning system could provide an extra layer of security. This system uses a laser beam located in front of the bridge. If a vehicle approaching the bridge is over the 11'10" maximum vertical clearance, flashers will activate, warning the driver of the pending collision. The design for the system was quickly prepared and rushed to the Operations Division for installation. The Signal Shop shifted into overdrive and completed the installation in record time.

The implementation of this warning system was a great GDOT team effort that will hopefully eliminate a problem that was very disruptive to downtown traffic and quite costly in property damage. Although all of the damage from the collisions was to the vehicles and the bridge has remained structurally sound, we hope this solution will keep traffic moving freely over as well as under the bridge...the way it should.





QUALITY, continued from page 1

if we didn't do an effective job of maintaining our streets (i.e., many potholes, clogged catch basins, etc.) or no traffic control devices, etc. I think we all can agree that the "Quality of Life" in Greensboro would be much lower if GDOT did not exist.

Remember our Quality Program Luncheon? Leadership + Quality = Excellence! As it relates to "Quality of Life" in Greensboro, the jobs we do each day, the services we provide, and the leadership we will exhibit in implementing our new GDOT Quality Star Program and efforts (and in making Quality our fifth core value), will all serve as long-term "Quality of Life" enhancements in Greensboro and key separators. The more focused we stay on doing our best work each and every day, continuously reviewing and examining our work practices and processes for improvement, and always keeping the needs and desires of the community in the forefront of all we do, the more positive and larger an impact GDOT will have on "Quality of Life" in Greensboro.

Finally, as we close in on the end of another very successful year, I wanted to personally thank each of you for your continued service and contributions to GDOT and our community. We have accomplished some great things in 2005 and in my opinion, substantially contributed to and enhanced "Quality of Life" in Greensboro. While 2006 promises to be another interesting and fast-paced year, I did want to encourage each of you to be sure to schedule some time off this holiday season to spend with your family and loved ones, and to get some well deserved rest and relaxation. Keep up the good work GDOT!

Jim Westmoreland
Director of Transportation

The Modern Roundabout

The roundabout...coming to an intersection near you!

The City of Greensboro is building the first of two Modern Roundabouts. Located at the intersection of Greene and McGee streets and also planned for the Lake Jeanette Rd/North Elm Street/Bass Chapel Road intersection, the roundabout will offer motorists a safer intersection by lowering driving speeds and reducing the number of conflict points, or opportunities for collisions. It features a central island, a circular roadway on which all vehicles travel counterclockwise, speed-reducing design elements and areas for landscaping and other aesthetics. In a roundabout, left turns are eliminated. Vehicles entering the intersection yield to those already in the roadway and only stop if necessary. The roundabout also contains a concrete apron around the central island that trucks and other large vehicles are free to track over...they are provided for this purpose.

Roundabouts greatly benefit pedestrians by allowing them to cross streets one lane at a time, using specially designed splitter islands. Vehicles are also required to stop for pedestrians in crosswalks. Cyclists use the roundabout like any motorized vehicle, riding in the middle of the roadway. The roundabout also offers maintenance savings including the elimination of electric traffic signals.

The Greene Street roundabout has an anticipated completion date of spring 2006. Look for more information in the days to come on the exciting new roundabouts!





PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

New Campaign Impacts GTA Ridership

Ridership on GTA bus service has increased steadily over the past few years, and by more than 17 percent since last fiscal year. GTA attributes a large portion of this growth to the *Dump the Pump* campaign, instituted in August 2005 (see article). The brainchild of GDOT's Information Specialist, **Kevin Elwood**, the campaign sought to publicize public transportation as a viable alternative to the rising fuel prices, while at the same time, attract discretionary riders to try transit.

Ridership during the first month of the campaign increased by 11 percent over the past fiscal year and by 15 percent the second month into the campaign. Because of Dump the Pump and a number of other initiatives by GTA, it is one of the few transit systems across the nation to experience this type of growth in ridership.



The Greensboro Transit Authority Honors the Memory of Rosa L. Parks

February 4, 1913 – October 24, 2005

To commemorate the life and contributions of Civil Rights leader, Rosa L. Parks, the Greensboro Transit Authority joined transit systems across the nation in honoring her life. On October 30-31, 2005, the front seat on all buses in the Greensboro Transit Authority fleet was reserved with a black ribbon and bow to honor Ms. Parks, who was regarded by many as the mother of the modern civil rights movement. In 1955, Rosa Parks' refusal to give up her seat on the bus began the historic Montgomery, Alabama bus boycott. She fought for and won the right for African-Americans to sit any place on the bus, a right guarded under the "equal protection of the laws" clause of the 14th Amendment of the U. S. Constitution. Her simple act of defiance began a movement that ended segregation in America. Ms. Parks passed away in her home in Detroit on October 24, 2005.



GTA Receives Notification of CMAQ Grant Award

University/College Service Moves Closer to Reality

The Greensboro Transit Authority received notification last month from the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) program that it would provide funding to support the operations and implementation of a university/college service. It is the primary purpose of CMAQ to fund transportation projects and programs in non-attainment and maintenance areas which reduce transportation-related emissions. The funding will offer students of all participating local institutions of higher learning (including Bennett College,



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Elon University School of Law, Greensboro College, Guilford College, Guilford Technical Community College and the University of North Carolina at Greensboro) with enhanced access to public transportation and will, thereby, minimize vehicular trips to and between the institutions and within the community. Funding from this program will provide both the capital and operational assistance to the City of Greensboro for the next three (3) years. Through successful efforts made over the past year to partner with local institutions, plans are now underway to launch the University/College Service during the fall of 2006.

GTA Celebrates Greensboro-In-Motion

On November 14-16, 2005 the Greensboro Transit Authority celebrated *Greensboro-in-Motion Days* by promoting transit among several groups within the community. A spin-off from the one-day Communities in Motion Day celebration initially developed by the American Public Transportation Association, GTA's *Greensboro-in-Motion Days* sought to celebrate the many benefits of public transportation in the community. Staff met with the Bardolph Senior Resource Center, the Lutheran Family Multi-Cultural Community Group and LifeSpan, the independent living facility for persons with disabilities. Following the presentation and a question and answer period, a brief survey was distributed at each facility to determine how GTA can better meet the needs of each group. GTA gift bags were also disseminated to all participants. Staff plans to continue providing forums of this nature to better promote transit in the community.



GTA Takes A Ride At Fun 4th

Everyone loves a parade, including the folks at GTA. Staff from GTA and ATC/Vancom, GTA's contractor participated in this year's Fun 4th parade in downtown Greensboro. Public Transportation Manager **Libby James** and ATC General Manager Nancy Nichols were joined by **George Linney**, **Julius Horton** and several other staff persons in the festivities, walking the entire parade route and handing out candy to the children. Also featured in the parade was one of GTA's newest buses, festooned on each side with patriotic billboards encouraging parade watchers to "Celebrate Independence!" The event offered the community a close up look at GTA late model equipment used on its 24 routes and connectors. Anxious to show the capabilities of the vehicle, bus operator Ron Santee took several opportunities to activate the "kneeling" feature, raising and lowering the 30,000+ pound vehicle at the pull of a lever. The staff thoroughly enjoyed their participation in Fun 4th and hopes to participate in many other community events to remind the public that this is "your public transportation system!"





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needs. Headlights, exhaust vents, turn signals, access handles and even the front-mounted bicycle rack all get special treatment so they will remain usable during the life of the bus wrap.

With the completion of trimming, the bus wrap needs to be tightened up around the number of corners, curves and other shaped edges. A propane torch does the job nicely. Running the blue flame across the vinyl causes it to shrink, fitting snugly against the underlying frame. Care is taken not to hold the flame in one place for too long or melting could result. With a few more tucks here and there, the installation is complete the bus is ready to hit the streets with its advertising message. When the display period purchased by the advertiser comes to an end, the material is simply peeled off. Damage to the underlying paint is usually minimal, and the advertiser agrees up front to cover the cost of repairing any damage. Most installers will apply and remove a test piece of vinyl initially before proceeding.



A number of companies and organizations have sponsored GTA bus wraps including GTCC, Winston-Salem State University and Coca-Cola. The Greensboro Fire Department recently as part of their fire safety and education plan ordered a bus wrapped to simulate an actual fire truck. Advertisers of every type will agree

that this form of advertising offers maximum exposure for their message because of its continuous mobility, criss-crossing an entire city of 200,000 people. However, the GTA staff and Board of Directors review every request for advertisement on the vehicles, and reserve the right to approve or reject any ad that does not meet strict standards.

That in a nutshell is the process of wrapping. A growing number of organizations have followed public transportation's lead in applying wraps not just to buses, but to their service vehicles and even personal vehicles, recognizing the unique promotional opportunity wrapping presents in contemporary marketing. Just another example of public transportation leading the way!

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Business Section

The Business Section has been extremely busy over the past six months. Due to significant growth in the public and private sectors of downtown Greensboro, the need to conduct a parking study became a priority. Beginning in July and spanning over approximately two and one-half months, our staff began collecting parking data to determine if there were any concerns or issues that needed to be addressed. The collected data will be analyzed by Desman & Associates, and they will make recommendations to help meet the parking needs of downtown growth. The results of the study should be complete before year-end and City staff will analyze the suggested recommendations.

We have also partnered with the Police Department to participate in the "PISTOL Project." Because of the project

name, I'm sure you're curious as to what this project is all about. Through the joint efforts of Police and GDOT, over 3,000 CAD drawings will be converted into VISIO drawings. Completion of this project will allow police officers the ability to digitally sketch the scene of an accident. This process will be very quick and much more accurate. The files will be maintained electronically in lieu of the "old fashioned" way of manually drawing and writing the details on paper.

Lastly, we are very excited that 43 Operations supervisory personnel are using Panasonic Toughbooks. We have received rave reviews from our supervisors because of their ability to send e-mails and track work from the field in lieu of returning to the office and firing up their desktop computer. Implementation of this technology has been a "quality" initiative from our team. We are definitely moving in the right direction!



Now Arriving at the Depot: Passenger Rail Service!

In October, the City of Greensboro, North Carolina Department of Transportation, elected officials, the business and professional community and the public at large all came together to celebrate an important milestone: the return of passenger rail service to downtown Greensboro. After a quarter-century absence, the first trains began service at the J. Douglas Galyon Depot's renovated train station on October 1st. The new facilities at the historic Southern Railway depot now houses the Greensboro Amtrak station with over 16,000 square feet of space...much more space than the Spring Garden Street location, Amtrak's local home since 1979

On Friday the 21st, a dedication event was held featuring speakers such as Mayor Keith Holiday, Congressman Howard Coble, NCDOT Deputy Secretary for Transit David King and more. Also participating in the ceremony was the Troop 101 Color Guard, Old North State Council of the Boy Scouts of America, who posted the colors at the start of the program. The attendees were also treated to a stunning rendition of the Star Spangled Banner by CaRee Goins, winner of the recent Triad Idol contest. Speakers at the ceremony highlighted the importance of rail transportation as well as the extensive planning and effort that has gone into recapturing the essence of one of the grandest train depots in the South. The event also featured a classic 1927 Ford Model T, built the same year original construction began on the Depot.

On Saturday the 22nd, the celebration continued with a community open house event. Despite the weather forecasts, many turned out for the "Rail-ebration" to visit participating City of Greensboro departments, face painting, balloon animals by Yippee Spoon the clown and inflatable jumping cages. Many thanks to the GDOT volunteers **Margie Chrismon, Marcel Edwards, Karen Marineau, Pat McLaurin, Fay Pegram, Jennifer Simmons, Tonya Williams, and Daryl Williamson** who assisted with the event. The Carolina Model Railroaders featured a portable layout at the celebration and also hosted guests at their club facility located on the grounds. Live entertainment on the mobile stage was provided throughout the day by 14-year-old TC Musical Sensation, StreetFeet, and steel drummer extraordinaire Tracy Thornton. Attendees also were able to tour the new facility and see what great changes have been made to the 80-year-old structure after four years of construction. Drawings were held throughout the day as well with three lucky winners taking home a model train set and vouchers for free travel on Amtrak.

With the final piece in place, the J. Douglas Galyon Depot is now a true multi-modal transportation hub, housing GTA, PART Express, Carolina Trailways, Greyhound and Amtrak. Visit it today!





GTA Asks commuters to Dump the Pump

Did you Dump the Pump?

In the midst of a war on terrorism, hurricanes and other natural disasters, fuel prices took center stage in the news for much of 2005 as America saw record highs in the cost of a gallon of gas. Skyrocketing costs affected businesses and organizations of all sizes with even the City of Greensboro feeling the pinch at the pump. The individual pocketbook was hit hardest, with people shelling out more dollars to fill their gas tanks. GTA seized the opportunity to advise our local community of a readily available alternative to the gas pump with the Dump the Pump campaign.

The 3-month campaign was created with the goals of raising awareness of public transportation as a viable alternative to driving and offering a sampling opportunity to try GTA, Greensboro's public transportation provider.

The publicity campaign, after months of planning, was launched in mid-August, at the high point of local and national news coverage of rising fuel prices. A number of events including the arrival of Hurricane Katrina and the disruption of the Colonial fuel pipeline serving the southeast all conspired to drive fuel prices to record levels, creating the perfect environment in which to shine the spotlight on the cost savings of public transportation.

The message was simple: Dump the Pump...don't pay high fuel prices...use public transportation...try GTA for free. From a marketing standpoint, the campaign targeted adults between the ages of 18 and 49. We also specifically targeted non-current public transportation riders, non-transit dependent riders and persons engaged in personal economic and societal issues.

The campaign centered on a custom designed website www.dumpthepump.net. The site contained information highlighting the state of affairs in fuel costs, the role public transportation plays in serving the community, Greensboro Transit Authority's role as the local transportation provider, and the option to receive two free trial passes on GTA. Respondents were mailed the passes along with a letter and additional information on GTA reminding them that although gas prices are rising daily, GTA still offers convenient and safe transportation for only \$1 per trip with free transfers.

Although the bulk of the publicity targeted the Greensboro area, the offer of free passes was available to persons who lived or worked in Guilford and Forsyth counties, where GTA's easy



connections with PART Express buses would also benefit inter-city commuters. The connections GTA offers with local, regional and national transportation was heavily emphasized. GTA's modern transfer station located at the J. Douglas Galyon Depot has direct connections with PART Express, Carolina Trailways, Greyhound and Amtrak.

The website also included an interactive gas calculator. Visitors could enter information on their current commute along with related costs such

as parking. The calculator would return the amount potentially saved by making the same trip using public transportation.

As expected, we received a decent amount of coverage in the local television, radio and newspaper media. WFMY reporter Heidi McGuire not only covered the Dump the Pump promotion for their news broadcast, but the next day videotaped her commute to work on a GTA bus, giving glowing reviews. The

news coverage was very beneficial, but we also supported the campaign with commercials on 102 Jamz and FM Talk 101.1 radio stations as well as transit ads on the side of GTA buses. Information was made available on the City of Greensboro's cable channel 13, and animated banners were placed on the GTA and GDOT websites. At GTA, the operators and staff were educated on the promotion and outfitted with custom-made Dump the Pump buttons.



The community responded to our message. Almost 1500 hits on the website were recorded between August 15th and October 31st, 600 free passes were requested to try GTA and many did! A number of City employees began using public transportation to commute to work, including a City Housing and Community Development staff person who was featured in a news story.

Our Dump the Pump promotion not only received local notoriety, but was featured in the September 19 issue of Passenger Transport, the lead publication of the Public Transportation industry. In the end, we not only gave many the opportunity to try GTA, but also created a valuable database of voluntary registrants that can be used for the future marketing of GTA services.

Since then, of course, oil companies have reported all-time record profits and gasoline prices have started recede. But we hope that the message is clear that regardless of the price at the pump, we all have a good friend in public transportation. So Dump the Pump..and ride GTA!



Quality In Focus at the Inaugural QSP Luncheon!

(Reprinted from November 2005 "On the Q" Newsletter)

So what do you get when 200 department members assemble in a room with a common focus on Quality? The inaugural Quality Star Program biannual luncheon! Employees from all five of GDOT's divisions gathered on Thursday, November 10th in the Triple Crown Room at Bur-Mil Park. The occasion allowed various staff members, who see others only occasionally in passing, to dine, fellowship and listen to the latest happenings on the Quality front. Appropriately enough for the season, the hall was decorated with fall foliage. Images reflecting the GDOT quality effort were projected on the big screen while the sounds of contemporary jazz served as an audio backdrop to good-hearted conversation.

Following the blessing and the meal, the program began with the introduction of the quality visionary, GDOT Director **Jim Westmoreland**. Following a few updates on current issues relevant to GDOT and the City, Jim began his presentation making the case for Quality and establishing it as our 5th Core value. His ongoing theme was Leadership plus Quality equals Excellence. He further suggested that we must all continue to improve the Quality of GDOT (and the transportation services we provide to Greensboro) through continuously reviewing all that we do and how we do it, and that we all are leaders when it comes to carrying out Quality. As a result, we will find improved transportation services (happy Citizens and Council Members!), improved ability to lead change (versus reacting to it), enhanced departmental communications and operations, and a greater feeling of satisfaction! To view the presentation in its entirety, visit the newsletter page of the GDOT website to download the PowerPoint file or send a request to GDOTQuality@greensboro-nc.gov.

The Division Managers each took their turn to share their area's pursuits in the quality initiative. Business/Parking's **Mike Cramer** talked about Administration's efforts to improve their processes while Parking has concentrated on maintenance and improvements to the City's four parking decks. Next, **Joe Mullinax** filled in for Engineering's Adam Fischer, discussing the Engineering quality circle and request for services survey, followed by Public Transportation's **Libby James**. Libby's team has honed in on an assessment of bus stop amenities and is developing a plan to improve or install amenities at more stops along their 24 routes and connectors. **Tyler Meyer** of the Planning Division mentioned their efforts targeting the technical work of roadway planning and sidewalk project development. Communications is also on their list, looking at increasing effective communication in the Metropolitan Planning Organization between member organizations. **Mike Mabe** wrapped up the division reports representing Operations' Dale Wyrick with information on their project, the Operations Quality Project Award. Here, crews nominated fellow crew members for efforts within the Operations Division. A number of great projects were proposed for the award, but the project to get the nod was the Transportation Warehouse Improvements by **Steve Huddy**, **Kimberly Dillard** and **SueRee Durham**. The luncheon audience then learned the results of the first Director's Quality Challenge. Jim Westmoreland identified a quality issue in the





downtown area and a special team was given the challenge to research and suggest a course of action to resolve the issue.

Mike Mabe then continued with the Back to Basics and Safety reports. According to the most recent stats, participation in B2B is down this year, but he encouraged the attendees to increase their reporting of B2B items, especially during the team challenge expected next spring. The 373-2417 Back to Basics Hot Line has been reactivated for the purpose of calling in service requests without going through the Contact Center. From January 1 – September 30, we had 3,807 B2B service requests, outpacing the 2,715 requests initiated by the public. The safety numbers, while looking very good for 2004-2005, were off to a pretty rough start this fiscal year. Last year, we saw 5 lost work cases. The goal was 8 or less. So far in the first four months of this fiscal year, we have seen 2 cases. In lost work days, last year's goal was less than 107, and we came in at 17. But this year with a goal of less than 71, we are already at 45 days. Mike reinforced the importance of safety not only for our personal health and well-being, but also as an important step in achieving OSHA Star Safety recognition.



The program then took a future focus as **Kevin Elwood** announced the establishment of the “Q” awards. The Q’s will recognize those who step up to make positive contributions to the quality effort. Winners will receive recognition on special plaques that will be located at the MMOB, Service Center, GTA and the Parking Section Office at Bellemeade Street Deck. The initial citations will be presented at the next QSP luncheon in the spring of 2006. Attendees were told to look for further information on the nomination process coming in the near future.

Speaking of recognition...the luncheon program moved into the presentation of the Service and Employee of the Month awards, and the Back to Basics point winners. Jim and Mike Cramer presented the EOM awards to **Marcel Edwards**, **Karen Marineau** and **Tonya Williams**, all from the Business/Parking Division. Jim took his turn to present the following Service Awards to the tenured staff: 5 year – **Michelle Shue** and **Chris Spencer**, 10 year – **Ricky Davis** and **Crispin Willard**, 15 year – **Robin Davenport**, 20 year – **Jonas Miller**, and 25 year – **Tim Elmore** and **Phil Wray**.

The Back to Basics top point winners were also recognized. **Monk Montgomery** took the top spot, followed by **Daniel Thompson** and **Pat McLaurin**. A drawing of the top Back to Basics point leaders resulted in additional point awards for **Ken Angel**, **Eddie Coble** and **Martin Lewis**.

The day's event wrapped up with recognition of the Quality Implementation committee. Jim thanked **Liz Carpenter**, **Margie Chrismon**, **Kevin Elwood**, **George Linney**, **Mike Mabe**, **Karen Marineau** and **Lydia McIntyre** for their hard work with the organizing of the luncheon as well as other implementation efforts. Jim also reminded us of the importance of keeping a Quality focus, not just on the job but in our home lives and everything that we do, and that the times we come together as a department are vital to keeping our spirit of teamwork alive!

Our thanks to everyone who attended the first QSP luncheon, and we hope that it, along with the wallet cards given to attendees, have provided yet another reminder for us all to aim for “Quality Always!”

